



BELLOWS FALLS AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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November 13, 2015

Michael J. Obuchowski, Commissioner
Department of Buildings & General Services
2 Governor Aiken Avenue
Montpelier, VT 05633-5801

**RE: Human Services and Educational Facilities Grant
Justice Center – Bellows Falls**

Dear Commissioner Obuchowski,

I write to express support for the application submitted by the Windham County Sheriff's Office to Buildings & General Services for the renovation and re-use of a long vacant and deteriorating historic mill building located on Paper Mill Road in Bellows Falls. The former Chemco Mill building, and now known as "Liberty Mill", is a well known and very visible structure that has sadly been abandoned and has been a target for vandalism as well as many other illegal activities in the southern end of the community.

The proposed project by the Sheriff's Department to create a "first-of-its-kind" Justice Center in this building, promises to be a model for criminal justice reform in southern Vermont and possibly throughout the country. The plan to renovate and utilize this building for administrative offices, counseling, dispatch, and programs related to education and training for incarcerated individuals and provide support for their families will be a welcome addition to this region.

The building and the site have created a blighted situation in the southern part of town. Renovation and re-use of the building, and the addition of professional jobs will be a tremendous asset to this community.

This is a project very worthy of this grant program. Please consider this application seriously. If I can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Francis Walsh
Executive Director